

February 17, 2017

Dear Sen. Osten, Sen. Formica, and Rep. Walker,

I am writing to strongly urge you to maintain the state funding for after school programs in this year's state budget. I realize that as Co-Chairs of the Appropriations Committee you have many pressures and issues you are balancing, and that the state budget is in tough shape. That said, eliminating the existing investment in after school programs would have a deleterious effect on our children and families that will end up costing us money in the long run.

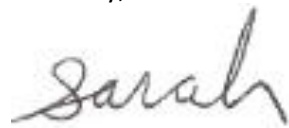
As Vice-Chair of the Connecticut After School Network, and as the former Executive Director of a similar organization in Rhode Island, I have seen firsthand the impact that afterschool programs have. They keep children and youth safe, engage them in experiential learning and leadership activities, and help working parents by having a place for students to go after school while parents are still at work.

Research has shown that up-front investment in after school programs helps prevent future costs to the state in the form of social services and incarceration. Myriad studies and evaluations have proven that, even with conservative estimates, afterschool programs are cost-effective and save money. Many of the areas in which afterschool programs save money through prevention are related to struggles with school. Juvenile crime, pregnancy, substance abuse, dropping out, these behaviors too often appear when a young person feels hopeless about the possibility of success in life. Afterschool programs address these risky and expensive (for society) behaviors in two ways. First, afterschool programs simply keep youth busy during the hours they are most likely to get into trouble. Second, afterschool programs provide young people with access to caring adults who provide the support they need to succeed, whether it's homework help or learning how to say no to drugs. As a result, children and youth who regularly attend quality afterschool programs have better grades and conduct in school, are more likely to graduate, and have lower incidences of drug-use, violence and pregnancy.

We know that it costs more than \$300,000 to house one youth at the Connecticut Juvenile Training School while it takes about one-hundredth that amount to provide a quality after school program. The return to taxpayers ranges from \$2.19 to \$3.22 for every dollar spent on high-quality after school programs, not including the significant savings that would result from lower crime (Brown, Frates, Rudge and Tradewell, 2002). Furthermore, every dollar invested in afterschool programs will save taxpayers approximately \$3, according to a study by the Rose Institute at Claremont McKenna College.

I urge you to maintain funding for after school programs in the state budget. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah".

Sarah Cahill
Vice-Chair, Board of Directors
CT After School Network